PASTURE AND HAYLAND MANAGEMENT

Definition

Proper treatment and use of pasture or hayland.

Purpose

To prolong life of desirable forage species; to maintain or improve the quality and quantity of forage; and to protect the soil, and reduce water loss.

Where Applicable

On all pastureland or hayland.

Technical Specifications

A. Pastureland Management

1. Grazing Management

a. Manage grazing of pastures so that adequate ground cover for soil protection is maintained at all times. Graze pastures rotationally or adjust stocking rates to prevent overgrazing.

Graze cool-season perennial pastures no closer than 3 inches. Warm-season perennials can be grazed to a 2 inch height except that Midland bermudagrass should not be grazed closer than 4 inches. Do not graze alfalfa, sericea lespedeza and red clover closer than 4 inches. Manage grazing of grass-clover mixtures to favor the clover.

b. Plan the number of pasture fields or sub-fields needed to allow regrowth of pasture plants between grazing periods. Determine size of pasture fields based on anticipated stocking rate, production potential, available soil resource and season of growth of pasture species. Regrowth periods for Tennessee adapted species vary from 21 to 32 days.

2. Fertilization

a. Maintain the fertility level of pasture fields so that adequate soil protection is provided to prevent damaging soil-loss from occurring.

Soils test information is the best guide for determining the lime and fertilizer needs of pasture fields for soil protection and production.

3. Weed and Brush Control

a. Weeds and Small Brush -- Mow or spray as often as needed to control weeds and brush and to prevent weeds from maturing seed. Refer to U. T. Agricultural Extension Service Publication No. 385, "Chemical Weed Control Guide" for information on chemicals to use and application methods.

b. Broomsedge (Andropogon virginicus) -- adequate use of lime and fertilizer to maintain a vigorous stand and complete ground cover of desired pasture plants coupled with grazing management and other management practices will prevent infestations of this weed. On pastures where broomsedge has invaded, mow in early August to prevent seed from maturing. To eradicate thick stands, renovate pasture by complete seedbed preparation followed by proper fertilization and seeding or cultivate for one or more years in row crops.

c. Large Brush and Woody Plants -- Refer to Brush Control Specifications in this Technical Guide for control methods.

4. Other Pasture Management Practices

a. Pasture Clipping --mow as necessary to remove seed aftermath or other unpalatable growth that tends to cause spot grazing.

b. Scattering Droppings -- harrow or drag pastures if droppings become numerous enough to prevent uniform grazing.

c. Provide an ample supply of livestock water properly located to promote uniform grazing.

d. Shade for livestock should be considered when planning layout of pasture fields.

B. Hayland Management

1. Fertilization

a. Maintain the fertility level of hayland so that adequate soil protection is provided to prevent damaging erosion from occurring.

Soil test information is the best guide for determining the lime and fertilizer needs for hayland fields, for soil protection and production.

2. Harvesting

Species	Period	When to Harvest for Maximum Yield and Quality	Minimum Cutting Height (Inches)
LEGUMES:			
Alfalfa	First Cutting	When in full bud	4
	Second Cutting	1/10 bloom	4
	Third Cutting	1/10 bloom. Usually should not be cut after the middle of September.	4
Clovers Red and Alsike	First Cutting	1/4 to 1/2 bloom.	3
	Second Cutting	Early bloom.	3
Crimson	Only Cutting	Early bloom	-
Sericea Lespedeza	First Cutting	When 10 to 12 inches high.	4
	Second Cutting	Same as first - never cut between September 1 and seed maturity.	4
Annual Lespedeza	Only Cutting	Early bloom or before leaves begin to shatter.	3
Grass-Legume Mixtures		When legume is at stage of growth stated above or at a height favorable to other desired species.	
GRASSES:			
Bermudagrass Midland (Coastal where adapted)	All Cuttings	Boot to bloom	4
Fescue, Tall & Orchardgrass	First Cutting	Boot stage	4
	Second Cutting	After 8-10 inch recovery growth.	4
Timothy	First Cutting	Boot to early bloom	4
	Second Cutting	When basal shoots appear at soil surface	4
Johnsongrass	First Cutting	Boot stage	4
	Second Cutting	Boot stage	4

3. Other Hayland Management Practices

a. For alfalfa weevil control, see U. T. Agricultural Extension Service Publication No. 433.

b. Do not allow sericea lespedeza to overcure. Cut in morning and rake that afternoon or next morning to prevent excessive loss of leaves.

c. Never cut sericea after September 1. To do so will weaken the stand.

d. Allow alfalfa ample time between last cutting and first killing frost to build-up food reserves before winter dormancy. This usually means that alfalfa should not be cut after September 15.